

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB, AS

SUBJECT: QUARTERLY MEETING OF TRADE UNION COUNCIL ACTS ON
MERGER AND SHORTER WORK WEEK.

1. IN REGULAR QUARTERLY MEETING STARTING MAY 20, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (ACTU) TOOK UP SEVERAL VITAL QUESTIONS; INCLUDING RESUMPTION OF EFFORT TO SECURE 35 HOUR WEEK, SUSPENDED DURING NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN; AND PROPOSED MERGER BETWEEN ACTU AND COUNCIL OF SALARIED AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS (AKACSPA).

2. THIRTY-FIVE HOUR WEEK IS NOW TOP ITEM FOR ACTION BY WHOLE AUSTRALIAN UNION MOVEMENT. ACTU PRESIDENT HAWKE TOLD LABATT MAY 20 THAT PROGRAM, ORIGINALLY ADOPTED AT LAST EXECUTIVE MEETING IN MARCH WILL PRESS FORWARD URGENTLY ON TWO FRONTS: ONE, BY PRESENTATION OF CASE TO FEDERAL ARBITRATION COMMISSION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, PROBABLY IN JULY; SECONDLY, BY COORDINATED CAMPAIGN OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION, CARRIED OUT BY EACH STATE TRADE UNION COUNCIL.

3. UNIONS ARE COUNTING HEAVILY ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN SUPPORT OF ARBITRATION COMMISSION HEARING, AND ARE UNDERSTANDABLY
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COY IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS AT THE MOMENT UNTIL FINAL RESULTS OF

ELECTION MAKE CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT WHITLAM GOVERNMENT IS TO CONTINUE IN POWER. HAWKE ALSO FRETTERING A BIT ABOUT RECENT THREAT BY MIN LABOR CAMERON TO WITHHOLD GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IF UNION STRIKES OCCUR BEFORE OR DURING HEARINGS. SINCE SUCH STRIKES HAVE BECOME USUAL TACTIC TO DEMONSTRATE RANK AND FILE SUPPORT DURING COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS, (AS OCCURRED DURING RECENT NATIONL WAGE CASE), HAWKE IS ENTITLED TO BE NERVOUS ABOUT POSSIBLE LEFT-WING MOVES, WHICH WOULD BE MOTIVATED MORE TO EMBARRASS HIM AND GOA, THAN FOR INDUSTRIAL GAINS. (THIS IS ONE REASON FOR HAWKES INDECISION ABOUT TRIP TO ILO AND TO UNITED STATES DURING JUNE. HE IS PRESENTLY CONSIDERING TWO ROUND TRIPS TO GENEVA IN MONTH).

4. AT MERGER SESSION, ACTU AND ACSPA ESTABLISHED JOINT WORKING COMMITTEE TO STUDY IMPLICATIONS AND TO MAKE REPORT LATER THIS YEAR. HAWKE TOLD LABATT FORMAL MERGER WOULD TAKE PLACE AT BIENNIAL ACTU CONFERENCE IN MELBOURNE DURING 1975.

5. COMMENT: MERGER TALKS BETWEEN WHITE AND BLUE COLLAR UNIONS HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR YEARS, SERIOUSLY FOR TWELVE MONTHS. NEW GROUP WILL HAVE OVER TWO MILLION MEMBERS (ACTU 1,900,000; ACSPA 300,000). STICKING POINT FOR WHITE COLLAR WORKERS HAS BEEN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF ACTU AND ITS AFFILIATION WITH LABOR PARTY (ALP). THIS POINT WAS EMPHASIZED BY JOHN SANDERS, GENERAL SECRETARY OF PRESTIGIOUS BANK OFFICIALS UNION (BOA) DURING MEETING WITH LABATT ON MAY 1. ALSO, WHITE COLLAR WORKERS ARE OPPOSED TO FLAT RATE INCREASES IN NATIONAL WAGE, LONG AN OBJECTIVE OF EGALITARIANS IN ACTU. SANDERS, AT RISK OF CRITICISM FROM HIS RANK AND FILE, RECENTLY TOOK PART IN SEVERAL PUBLIC ALP MEETINGS, BUT FELT HE WAS OBLIGATED TO DO SO BECAUSE OF UNION GAINS MADE UNDER LABOR GOVERNMENT. OBVIOUS AREA FOR DEALS OPEN FOR HAWKE AFTER UNITY ACHIEVED. HE WILL HEAD LARGEST ORGANIZATION IN AUSTRALIA OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT ITSELF. ACTU LEFT-WING WILL BE PROPORTIONATELY REDUCED AS FEW ACSPA MEMBERS ARE RADICAL POLITICALLY; MANY ACSPA AFFILIATES HAVE MEMBERSHIP OPEN WELL INTO MANAGERIAL LEVELS. (BRANCH BANK MANAGERS, FOR INSTANCE). NEW MERGED GROUP WILL HAVE SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT FROM ACSPA, IN DIRECT LINE TO SUCCEED HAWKE IF HE ENTERS PARLIAMENT ACCORDING TO LONG-HELD PLAN. MEANWHILE, HAWKE WILL HAVE SUPPORT OF NEW, EXPERT ASSISTANCE IN EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTU PROJECTS IN HOUSING, TRAVEL AGENCY AND INSURANCE FIELDS. LABATT FEELS MERGER WILL BE TOUGH TO ACHIEVE BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT WILL SURELY BE COMPLETE WITHIN TIME SCHEDULE. MERGER IS MOOD OF THE DAY. RIGHT-WING UNIONS ARE CONSOLIDATING WITHIN ACTU, AS WITNESS PRESENT UNITY BETWEEN POWERFUL AUSTRALIAN WORKERS UNION, LARGEST AND MOST CONSERVATIVE IN ACTU, AND NIMBLE, GROWING SHOP DISTRIBUTIVE AND ALLIED EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION. ALSO EMPLOYER GROUPS ARE MOVING TOWARD CONSOLIDATION WITH CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN THE ASSOCIATED CHAMBER OF MANUFACTURES AND THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF EMPLOYERS' FEDERATIONS WELL ADVANCED. IF SUCCESSFUL,

HAWKE WILL HEAD ALMOST TOTAL LABOR FORCE. FEW INDEPENDENTS AND
PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES OUTSIDE FOR MOMENT, BUT PRESSURE TO
JOIN WILL BE TREMENDOUS. LABATT SPECULATES THAT HAWKE MIGHT HERE
FIND POWER BASE THAT HAS SO FAR ELUDED HIM.
BROWN

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